

## GRAY WATER Do's

- ☑ Only apply by hand watering methods
- ☑ Only apply enough water that can be absorbed
- ☑ Only use waste water from baths, showers, wash sinks, washing machines
- ☑ Stop using gray water if odors are generated or plants appear unhealthy
- ☑ Wash your hands after watering with gray water
- ☑ Use gray water only during prolonged warm, dry periods, and use only what the plants need

## GRAY WATER DON'Ts

- ☑ Don't water a vegetable garden with gray water
- ☑ Don't disconnect plumbing or pipes from sewer or septic systems
- ☑ Don't allow gray water to flow from property or enter storm drains
- ☑ Don't use gray water from washing clothes soiled with fecal matter or vomit, such as diapers or illness in the home
- ☑ Don't collect and store gray water
- ☑ Don't allow children or pets to drink or play with gray water



**WATER IS ONE OF  
OUR MOST VALUABLE  
RESOURCES**

**USE WATER WISELY  
&  
RECYCLE GRAY  
WATER PROPERLY**



**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICE  
NEAREST YOU:**

North District: 404-332-1801  
Central District: 404-730-1301  
South District: 404-763-5579

*Fulton County  
Health and Human Services*

**Environmental Health  
Services Division**



**USING  
GRAY WATER  
PROPERLY**

**GRAY WATER  
REGULATION O.C.G.A.**

**31-3-5.2**

# O.C.G.A. 31-3-5.2

## GRAY WATER REGULATION

Senate Bill 463 has amended existing sewage disposal regulations to allow the direct use of residential gray water for hand watering outside plants. The provisions within this amendment must be followed to reduce the risks to public health and the environment.

Private residential reuse of gray water shall be in compliance with OCGA 31-3-5.2 if the following conditions are met:

- it is contained within the property
- it is limited to gardening, composting, lawn watering, or landscape irrigation
- it shall not be used for water food plants
- it does not contain hazardous chemicals
- it is managed to minimize standing water
- it is outside of a floodway
- it has been disinfected\* if collected after
- washing infectious objects or articles of clothing
- it is applied by hand watering with hand held containers

To disinfect gray water, use a capful of unscented bleach per gallon of waste water. Mix contents. Allow the container to sit for 30 minutes before watering



### WHAT IS GRAY WATER?

The Official Code of Georgia Annotated, O.C.G.A. 31-3-5.2, states gray water is wastewater generated from residential lavatories, bathtubs, showers, clothes washers, and laundry trays. These fixtures do not include toilets, urinals, bidets, kitchen sinks, dishwashers, and garbage disposals.

Simply put, gray water is wash water used in the home, except from the toilet or kitchen sink. Kitchen sink and toilet wastewater contains high concentrations of food wastes, chemicals, viruses and bacteria that can be harmful to soil and vegetation and can cause disease.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF USING GRAY WATER?

Any wastewater poses a risk to a person's health and to the environment. Gray water is water that has been used and contains bacteria or chemicals that make it unsafe.

### ANY WASTEWATER POSES A POTENTIAL RISK

Water quality of gray water can vary depending on the number of household occupants, their age and health, the water source, and products used, such as soaps, shampoos, detergents, etc. Gray water may contain:

- Disease causing organisms such as bacteria, viruses, and protozoa
- Chemicals from soaps, dyes, mouthwash, bleaches, disinfectants, cleaners, etc.

**GRAY WATER CONTAINS BACTERIA, VIRUSES, AND OTHER HAZARDS TO HEALTH SUCH AS:**  
**E. Coli or Salmonella**  
**Hepatitis or Norovirus**  
**Hazardous Household Chemicals**



**GRAY WATER FROM A WASHING MACHINE MUST BE DISINFECTED\* BEFORE USING**

### HIGHER RISK GRAY WATER SOURCES

Other sources of gray water pose higher risks to health and the environment and are not approved for use in Georgia. Gray water shall not contain hazardous chemicals from activities such as cleaning machinery or used in certain hobbies:

- Cleaning car parts
- Home photographic lab
- Rinsing paint brushes
- Cleaning pesticide or herbicide containers